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The Grammar of ornament: Illustrated by examples from various styles of ornament

Owen Jones

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An excellent resource for artists, designers, architects, craftspeople, or anyone interested in the decorative arts. First published in 1856, The Grammar of Ornament remains a design classic. Its inspiration came from the pioneering architect and designer Owen Jones. His observations of decorative art on his extensive travels in Europe and the Near East were employed to improve the poor quality of Western design. His goal was to change the Victorian habit of mixing elements from a wide variety of sources and applying this mix indiscriminately to buildings, graphic design, and products. His resulting study is a comprehensive analysis of a remarkable collection of styles of ornamental design -- from Ancient Egypt and Greece to Imperial China and Renaissance Italy. With its sumptuous illustrations, its detailed survey of individual cultures, and its manifesto of "General Principles," it offered guidance to the designers of the future. In this new edition the designs are further illuminated by Iain Zaczek's perceptive commentaries. Hugely influential since its first publication, The Grammar of Ornament inspired great figures such as William Morris and Frank Lloyd Wright. Contemporary designers, entertained by the archaic charm of Jones's descriptions, are struck by the book's enduring relevance and its soundness regarding the essential principles of good design.

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